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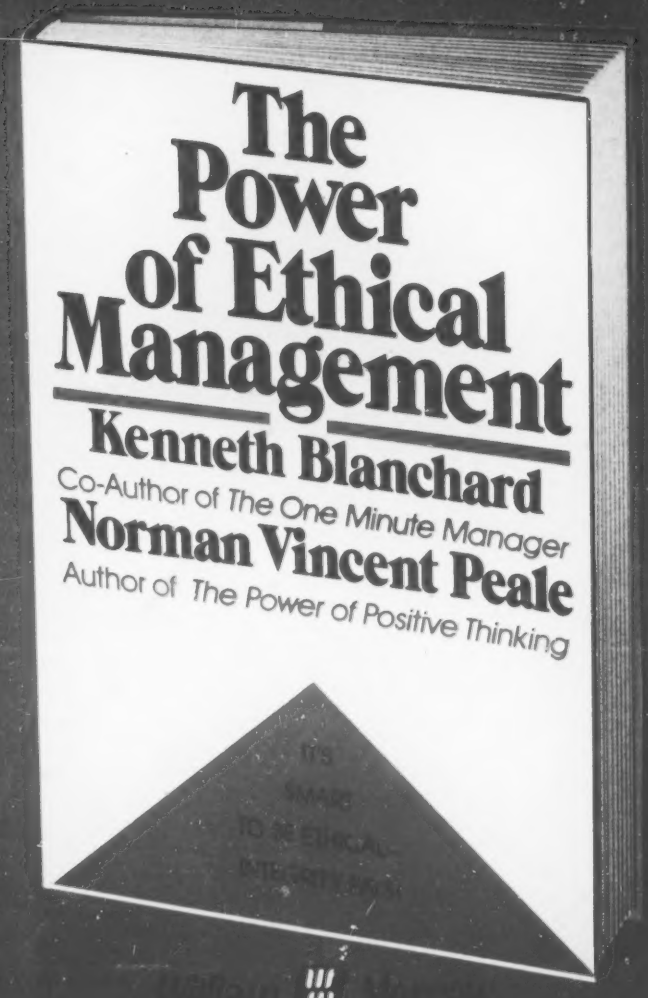
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Kenneth Blanchard
Co-Author of The One Minute Manager
Norman Vincent Peale
Author of The Power of Positive Thinking

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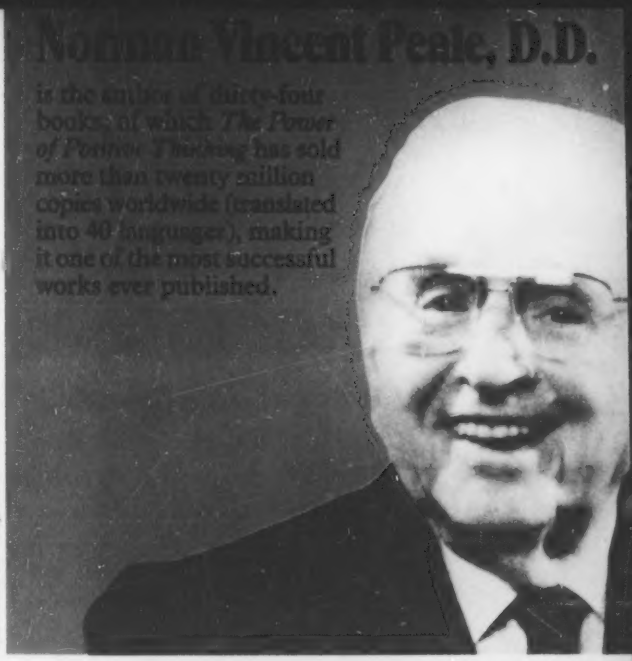

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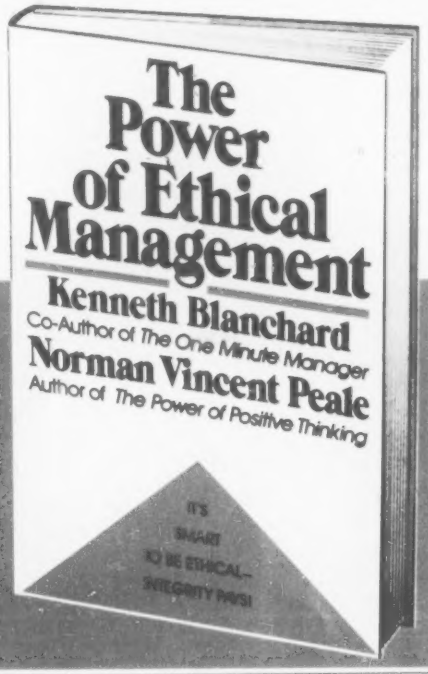
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LEONARD WOOD

Book Buying Up Among Younger Readers

During the first six months of 1987, one in five adults made a recent book purchase. Questioned between January and June, 21% of Americans claimed to have bought a book within the past seven days—a proportion nearly identical to that found during the same six month interval in 1985 (19%) and 1986 (21%).

But there has been some change over the three-year period among the age groups most likely to buy a book. The first half of 1985 saw one in five 18–24-year-olds (19%) buying a book in the past seven days, but the age group most likely to have made a purchase was the 35–49-year-olds. By 1987, however, the proportion of young people who reported book purchases increased by five percentage points, so that one in four 18–24-year-olds (24%) bought a book. There was also a slight increase in book buying by 25–34-year-olds (+2 percentage points). Adults age 50 and older, however, continued to be less likely than younger people to buy books.

Not only have young people increased their incidence of book buying since 1985; they have also increased the number of books they buy. Among book buyers in 1985, 18–24-year-olds reported buying an average of 2.1 books in the past week, the smallest amount of any age group. This figure increased to 2.6 in 1987, while the average number of books bought by those age 50 and older decreased to 2.3, thereby reversing 1985's pattern. Young adults also paid more for their books than did older people. Paperbacks purchased by 18–24-year-olds cost an average of $7.20, compared to under $6 for the softcovers bought by older people. Similarly, young people's hardcovers averaged $24.60, almost $10 more than the approximately $15 paid by older adults.

NOTE: *Results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a nationally representative sample of 6108 adults, age 18 and older, from January–June, 1987.*

TABLE 1

PURCHASED ANY BOOKS IN PAST 7 DAYS

	Jan.-June 1985	Jan.-June 1986	Jan.June 1987	Chg. % pts. 1985–1986
	%	%	%	
Total Adults	19	21	21	+2
Age				
18–24 years	19	24	24	+5
25–34 years	22	23	24	+2
35–49 years	25	25	25	+0
50 and over	14	14	16	+2

TABLE 2

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BOOKS PURCHASED

	Jan.-June 1985	Jan.-June 1986	Jan.June 1987
Total Book Buyers	2.4	2.4	2.5
Age			
18–24 years	2.1	2.2	2.6
25–34 years	2.2	2.3	2.6
35–49 years	2.5	2.6	2.5
50 and over	2.6	2.5	2.3

TABLE 3

AVERAGE PRICE PAID

	January-June 1987	
	Paperback	Hardback
Total Book Buyers	5.80	16.50
Age		
18–24 years	7.20	24.60
25–34 years	5.40	15.20
35–49 years	5.70	15.10
50 and over	5.60	14.50